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Oceans and the law of the sea

Australia, Barbados, Canada, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga and United States of America: draft resolution

Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 46/215 of 20 December 1991, 49/116 and 49/118 of 19 December 1994, 50/25 of 5 December 1995, 51/36 of 9 December 1996, 52/29 of 26 November 1997 and 53/33 of 24 November 1998, as well as other resolutions on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments,

Welcoming the Rome Declaration on the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries adopted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Ministerial Meeting on Fisheries in March 1999,

Noting that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries sets out principles and global standards of behaviour for responsible practices to conserve, manage and develop fisheries, including guidelines for fishing on the high seas and in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States, and on fishing gear selectivity and practices, with the aim of reducing by-catch and discards,

Recognizing that coordination and cooperation at the global, regional, subregional as well as national levels in the areas, inter alia, of data collection, information-sharing, capacity-building and training are crucial for the conservation, management and sustainable development of marine living resources,

Noting the conclusion of negotiations to establish new regional organizations and arrangements in several heretofore unmanaged fisheries, in particular the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, and the Convention on the Conservation

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and Management of Fishery Resources in the South-east Atlantic Ocean, and highlighting that these agreements were concluded pursuant to the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks,[1]

Noting also the adoption by the States members of the Permanent Commission for the South-east Pacific of the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in High Seas of the South-east Pacific,

Recognizing the importance of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas, and noting with concern that neither of these agreements has yet entered into force,

Noting with satisfaction that the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in February 1999 adopted international plans of action for the management of fishing capacity, for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries and for the conservation and management of sharks,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General,[2] and emphasizing the useful role that the report plays in bringing together information relating to the sustainable development of the world's marine living resources provided by States, relevant international organizations, regional and subregional fisheries organizations and non-governmental organizations,

Noting with satisfaction that, while significant work remains to be done, interested parties have made real progress towards sustainable fisheries management,

Noting that while there has been generally a marked decrease in the reporting of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing activities in most regions of the world's oceans and seas, large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing remains a threat to marine living resources in some areas,[3]

Expressing its continuing concern that efforts should be made to ensure that the implementation of resolution 46/215 in some parts of the world does not result in the transfer to other parts of the world of drift-nets that contravene the resolution,

Noting with concern that unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas/illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing remains as one of the most severe problems currently affecting world fisheries and the sustainability of living marine resources, and noting also that unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas/illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has a detrimental impact on the food security and the economies of many States, particularly developing States,

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[1] A/CONF.164/37; see also A/50/550, annex I.

[2] A/55/386.

[3] Ibid., paras. 12-64.

Noting the significance of the work being undertaken under the aegis of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to develop a comprehensive international plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, involving consideration of the range of possibilities for action in accordance with international law, and acknowledging the work done by certain regional fisheries organizations,

Welcoming the efforts in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to address the causes of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, through a comprehensive and integrated approach, involving all relevant States and regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements, to the deterrence of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing which encourages all States to take, to the greatest extent possible, measures or to cooperate to ensure that their nationals, in accordance with article 117 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[4] and vessels flying their flag do not support or engage in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,

Welcoming also the cooperation being undertaken with the International Labour Organization and other relevant international organizations in the joint Ad Hoc Working Group on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization,

Recognizing the need for the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements to address the issue of marine debris derived from land-based and ship-generated sources of pollution, including derelict fishing gear, which can cause mortality and habitat destruction of living marine resources,

Expressing concern at the significant level of by-catch and discards in several of the world's commercial fisheries, and recognizing that the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques will be important for reducing by-catch and discards,

Expressing concern also at the reports of continued loss of seabirds, particularly albatross, as a result of incidental mortality from longline fishing operations, and the loss of other marine species, including sharks and fin-fish species, as a result of incidental mortality, and noting the recent initiative to develop a convention for the protection of southern hemisphere albatrosses and petrels,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance it attaches to the long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of the marine living resources of the world's oceans and seas and the obligations of States to cooperate to this end, in accordance with international law, as reflected in the relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,[4] in particular the provisions on cooperation set out in part V and part VII, section 2, of the Convention regarding straddling stocks, highly migratory species, marine mammals, anadromous stocks and marine living resources of the high seas;

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[4] *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. XVII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.V.3), document A/CONF.62/122.

2. *Also reaffirms* the importance it attaches to compliance with its resolutions 46/215, 49/116, 49/118, 50/25, 52/29 and 53/33, and urges States and other entities to enforce fully the measures recommended in those resolutions;

3. *Encourages* all States to implement directly or, as appropriate, through the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations and regional and subregional fisheries organizations and arrangements, the international plans of action of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for reducing the incidental take of seabirds in longline fisheries, for the conservation and management of sharks and for the management of fishing capacity, since the state of progress in the implementation of all three plans will be reported to the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee, to be held from 26 February to 2 March 2001;

4. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations aimed at providing assistance to developing countries in upgrading their capabilities in monitoring, control and surveillance, through its Inter-regional Programme of Assistance to Developing Countries for the Implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

5. *Also takes note with satisfaction* of the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility, aimed at promoting the reduction of by-catch and discards in fisheries activities;

6. *Reiterates* the importance of continued or strengthened efforts by States, directly or, as appropriate, through the relevant regional and subregional organizations, and by other international organizations, to make it a high priority to support, including through financial and/or technical assistance, with a particular emphasis on capacity-building, the efforts of developing States, in particular the least developed countries and the small island developing States, to achieve the goals and implement the actions called for in the present resolution, including to improve the monitoring and control of fishing activities and the enforcement of fishing regulations;

7. *Urges* States, relevant international organizations and regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements that have not done so to take action to reduce by-catch, fish discards and post-harvest losses consistent with international law and relevant international instruments, including the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

8. *Calls upon* States and other entities referred to in article 1, paragraph 2 (b), of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks[1] that have not done so to ratify or accede to it and to consider applying it provisionally;

9. *Calls upon* States and other entities referred to in article 10, paragraph 1, of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas that have not deposited instruments of acceptance of the Agreement to do so;

10. *Recalls* that Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, calls upon States to take effective action, consistent with international law, to deter reflagging of vessels by their nationals as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management measures for fishing vessels on the high seas;

11. *Calls upon* States that have not done so to take measures to deter reflagging of fishing vessels flying their flag to avoid compliance with applicable obligations and to ensure that fishing vessels entitled to fly their flag do not fish in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States unless duly authorized by the authorities of the States concerned and in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorization, and that they do not fish on the high seas in contravention of the applicable conservation and management measures;

12. *Urges* States to continue the development of an international plan of action on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as a matter of priority, so that its Committee on Fisheries can be in a position to adopt elements for inclusion in a comprehensive and effective plan of action at its twenty-fourth session, to be held from 26 February to 2 March 2001;

13. *Appeals* to States and regional fisheries organizations, including regional fisheries management bodies and regional fisheries arrangements, to promote the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries within their areas of competence;

14. *Reaffirms* the rights and duties of coastal States to ensure proper conservation and management measures with respect to the living resources in zones under their national jurisdiction, in accordance with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea;

15. *Invites* regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements to ensure that all States having a real interest in the fisheries concerned may become members of such organizations or participate in such arrangements;

16. *Encourages* the International Maritime Organization and other relevant agencies, organizations and States to continue working constructively with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to combat unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing;

17. *Invites* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to continue its cooperative arrangements with United Nations agencies on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to report to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in his annual report on oceans and the law of the sea, on priorities for cooperation and coordination in this work;

18. *Affirms* the need to strengthen, where necessary, the international legal framework for intergovernmental cooperation in the management of fish stocks and in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, in a manner consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and taking into account the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation

and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and other relevant principles of international law;

19. *Affirms also* the central role that regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements have in intergovernmental cooperation to assess living marine resources within their competence, to manage their conservation and sustainable use and thus to promote food security and sustain the economic base of many States and communities, and further affirms that they also will play a key role in implementing applicable international law, including, as appropriate, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Fish Stocks Agreement and the Compliance Agreement, and in promoting the application of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

20. *Calls upon* the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations to take up, as a matter of priority, the issue of marine debris as it relates to fisheries and, where appropriate to promote better coordination and help States to fully implement relevant international agreements, including annex 5 and the Guidelines of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto;

21. *Invites* all relevant parts of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral donor agencies to take into account the importance of marine science, including the importance of protecting the ecosystem, and the precautionary approach, with the aim of providing support to subregional and regional organizations and arrangements and their member States, for sustainable fisheries management and conservation, and notes that, for developing countries, capacity-building is essential for the sustainable development of living marine resources;

22. *Recommends* that the biennial conference of regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations should consider measures to strengthen further the role of these organizations in all aspects of fisheries conservation and management;

23. *Recommends also* that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations should consider inviting the intergovernmental organizations relevant to its work to join the biennial conference of regional fisheries organizations;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, and to invite them to provide the Secretary-General with information relevant to the implementation of the present resolution;

25. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including the status and implementation of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on

the High Seas, the implementation of the international plans of action for the management of fishing capacity, for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries, and for the conservation and management of sharks, and efforts undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, taking into account the information provided by States, relevant specialized agencies, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and arrangements and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

26. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session, under the item entitled "Oceans and law of the sea", the sub-item entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments".